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**FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN**

**CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA**

Motivation: An Exploratory Study of the Preferences Teenage Students Have Regarding Group Work in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom at “Ricardo Muñoz Chávez” Junior High School in the Eighth Level of Basic Education

**Trabajo Investigativo del Curso de Graduación previo a la obtención del Título de Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación en la Especialización de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa**

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## RESUMEN

Debido a que el inglés parece no ser bien aceptado por los adolescentes, en este documento se analiza las preferencias de éstos estudiantes hacia el trabajo en grupo como un factor motivador para aprender inglés. Este estudio fue llevado a cabo con la participación de las estudiantes del octavo de Educación Básica de la escuela Ricardo Muñoz Chávez. Encuestas, una entrevista y observación fueron las técnicas empleadas para obtener los resultados requeridos. Al principio de la investigación, las estudiantes preferían trabajar en parejas o individualmente en vez de grupos. Sin embargo, al final del estudio los resultados reflejaron que el trabajar en grupos motivó a las estudiantes a aprender inglés porque entre ellas se ayudaron mutuamente, organizaron las tareas y lo más importante es que se sintieron seguras de sí mismas para hablar inglés en frente de sus compañeras de grupo, que en frente de toda la clase. Por lo tanto, los profesores deben considerar el trabajar en grupos como una estrategia apropiada para así motivar a los alumnos al estudio del inglés.

**Palabras Claves:** trabajo en grupo – motivación – octavo de básica – estrategia



### **ABSTRACT**

Since English language seems to be not very well received by teenage students, this research paper analyzes these students' preferences towards group work as a motivational factor to learn English. This study was carried out with the participation of female learners in the eighth level at Ricardo Muñoz Chávez School. In order to obtain the results a survey, an interview, and observation techniques were applied. At the beginning of the investigation, students preferred to work in pairs or individually instead of working in groups. However, at the end of the examination, the findings reflected that putting students into groups motivated them to learn English because they helped each other, organized tasks, and felt self-confidence to speak the target language in front of some group classmates instead of the whole class. Thus, teachers must consider group work as a suitable learning strategy in order to avoid the adolescent students' apathy towards English.

**Key Words:** group work – motivation – eighth level – strategy



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### **AUTHORSHIP**

All the ideas, comments, and opinions stated in this paper are the only responsibility of its author, Sandra Buele.

Sandra Buele

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### **DEDICATION**

To Anita, wherever you are, this is for you mom. To my father and sister who have been my unconditional support. Thanks for encouraging me to achieve this academic goal in my life. I love you so much.



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First of all, I would like to thank God for giving me wisdom and strength to be able to graduate. Thanks a lot to my family for supporting me any time. I thank to my professors and classmates for sharing their knowledge and experiences with me. Finally, thanks to everybody who helped me when I needed it.

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## INTRODUCTION

Due to the importance English nowadays has acquired, both its teaching and learning are essential in each society. Therefore, in our country, each academic institution offers the English subject. However, there is a difficulty in its learning that has to do especially with teenage students. They do not feel motivated to learn English as a foreign language, and the teenagers only study it because it is a mandatory subject. Therefore, it is vital that a teacher applies different ways to encourage in the students positive attitudes towards the learning of the target language and to overcome this challenge.

So this paper focuses on one of these ways which has to do with group work. Working in groups is a learning strategy which has some aspects that makes English learning attractive for the students. In addition, group work activities not only work on behalf of learning inside the classroom but also outside of it. Therefore, this situation also plays an important role in the development of motivation in the learners.

In order to carry out this study, there is a theoretical part where the advantages of group work is located, some group work activities, the teacher's role, and assessment of working in groups.

Furthermore, since the purpose of this research paper is to identify if the adolescent students who belong to the eighth level of the Ricardo Muñoz Chávez School were being motivated to learn English at the moment of working in groups, it has one section which concerns analysis and interpretation of the obtained data.

Also, in this paper are located conclusions about the study and some recommendations, with the idea that working in groups really causes assertive effects in students.

Finally, this paper has some pictures of the students at the moment of working in groups, with the purpose of creating a visual image in the reader's mind about how this strategy looks and what are some of the students'



behaviors.



## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### 1.1 Topic

Motivation: An Exploratory Study of the Preferences Teenage Students Have Regarding Group Work in the English as a Foreign Language Classroom at “Ricardo Muñoz Chávez” Junior High School in the Eighth Level of Basic Education.

#### 1.2 Description of the problem

According to previous knowledge, English as a foreign language seems to be not very well received by teenage students because there are some beliefs about it, which might influence students' motivation to learn it. One of these beliefs is about language learning. Students might learn English as a foreign language in different ways. It means learners might choose their own learning strategies to complete a task. One of the learning strategies involves group work. One problem about group work might be the following. Some students seem to feel displeased when they have to work together because of some reasons. So this might be a cause why students feel discouraged to learn English. Therefore, the intention of this paper is to give a contribution about students' motivation towards learning English, but based on their preferences which are focused on group work.

#### 1.3 Justification

Two main reasons were studied to develop this topic. First, it is to identify teenage students' preferences towards group work in learning English, and second, to analyze if these inclinations might motivate students to learn English.

In the English class, communication or collaboration among two or more people is inevitable; therefore, group work might take place on it. Within group work, learners interact helping each other, developing some skills, completing a task, etc. But there are some matters that might be considered when learners are part of a group work. Because of stage of transition, every



student might confront some challenges at the moment of working in groups, so the learning English might be affected. At that moment, students' preferences might be taken into account in order to avoid some displeasures, troubles, interpersonal issues, etc. and to achieve the desired learning of English.

The second concern is about motivation to learn English. Every day the students have to interact among them, so they have to work in groups sometimes. Therefore, all factors which have to do with working in groups might act as motivating factors in order to learn English.

### **1.4 Objectives**

#### **General Objective**

- To identify to what extent teenage students' preferences towards group work motivate them to learn English.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- To describe teenage students' preferences towards group work in the English class.
- To verify if students' preferences are taken into account at the moment of teaching English.
- To analyze students' preferences towards group work as motivating factors to learn English.



## CHAPTER II

### GROUP WORK AND MOTIVATION

#### 2.1 Definition of group work

There are a lot of definitions about group work; however, the following conceptions are focused in the field of teaching-learning of English as a foreign language.

According to Burdett and Hastie, group work is “a technique followed to provide an opportunity for students to engage in peer-to-peer learning” (qtd. in Khalaf 194).

Another author such as LaRoche defines group work as “a student-centered teaching method” where learners are the active participants inside a class conveying their opinions and thoughts about a specific topic (50).

The authors Richards and Lockhart point out that “group work is a learning arrangement where students work in groups on learning tasks” (147).

Doff states that “group work is a way of organising the class where the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together (usually four or five students in each group)” (137-138).

According to Williams and Burden “in group work, learners communicate between each other and complete class work. Being defined as the one of the most important way of learner activation” (qtd. in Cinar).

As can be seen, all the above definitions have in common the following terms: “organization”, “communication”, “working together”, and “active participation.” Therefore, group work is a way of learning where students order their ideas to express them in order to help each other, this being the result of a dynamic involvement.





## **2.2 Types of group work**

According to Ellis, there are two types of group work that are used inside a classroom (qtd. in Cinar).

### **2.2.1 Heterogeneous**

This type of group regards putting students who have different ability levels together. Richards and Rodgers utter “Groups can be teacher-selected, random, or student-selected, although teacher-selected, is recommended as usual mode so as to create groups that are heterogeneous on such variables as past achievement, ethnicity, or sex” (qtd. in Cinar). Since students share not only ideas but also knowledge, group work causes a positive effect in language learning.

### **2.2.2 Homogeneous**

As its name denotes, homogeneous group work concerns placing students who present similar ability levels together. This type is the opposite of the heterogeneous one. For example, students who have the same grades in a test work jointly (qtd. in Cinar).

## **2.3 Importance of group work in English as a foreign language class**

Group work has been considered one of the most suitable techniques to encourage language learning among students. Therefore, it is essential to recognize its importance inside a class. Some authors have analyzed group work from different perspectives; among these approaches are communicative language teaching (CLT), cooperative language learning (CL), and community language learning (CLL).

### **2.3.1 From the perspective of Communicative language teaching (CLT)**

In the article The Use of Group Work, the purpose of CLT is that students use the acquired language in real life situations. So, the application of group work gives students the chance of practicing an authentic and real communication (1).

According to Richards and Rodgers, in CLT, class assignments are based on finishing the given activities using the target language. For this reason, “authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom



activities” (qtd. in Cinar). Therefore, group work activities foster communication among learners.

### **2.3.2 From the perspective of Cooperative language learning (CLL)**

As is mentioned in the article The Use of Group Work, cooperative learning has to do with the application of groups where students complete an activity working together in order to improve their own and the other members’ learning (2). So, group work has a vital relationship with cooperative language learning.

Richards and Rodgers point out “CLL is learning in groups where the learners interact with each other” (qtd. in Cinar). As it is mentioned above, cooperation plays an essential role in working in groups.

### **2.3.3 From the perspective of community language learning (CLL)**

According to Richards and Rodgers, “in CLL, learners work together to enhance their language competence” (qtd. in Cinar) In addition, they mention that when students work in groups, learners feel relaxed (qtd. in Cinar). That is to say, group work is one of the main factors of community language learning.

The above mentioned approaches present some reasons to emphasize why teachers must continue applying group work in the EFL class.

## **2.4 Advantages of Group Work**

Since group work is a fundamental piece in some methods, its use involves some profits for the language classroom.

The author Ur notes that “the communicative tasks implemented within a group reflect better real life situations which are very restricted outside the classroom. Thus, advantages of group work are usually subcategorized as social, psychological, and cognitive advantages” (qtd. in Cinar).

### **2.4.1 Social advantages**

“Group work contributes in the development of superior social attitudes and values in the foreign language learner. In addition, it enhances a sense of identity, belonging, knowledge and skills, and then group is thought as



place where relationships form and develop” (Cinar). That is to say, working in groups represents the \*heart\* of socialization inside a class.

### 2.4.2 Psychological advantages

Richards and Rodgers say that “learners assume responsibility for their own learning” (qtd. in Cinar). For this reason, at the moment of working in groups, students develop other values such as respect and patience in order to avoid conflicts and finish the task harmoniously.

### 2.4.3 Cognitive advantages

According to Richards and Rodgers, group work helps in the advance of the student’s “communicative competence”, and its application in real life situations (qtd. in Cinar). In addition to this, working in groups expands students’ language knowledge.

Other authors such as Richards and Lockhart point out the following benefits.

- ✓ Working in groups decreases the total control of the teacher over the class (153).
- ✓ Group work promotes student involvement in the class (153).
- ✓ Students have more chances to perform and apply different structures of English (153).
- ✓ Since students work together in order to complete an activity, cooperation emerges among them (153).
- ✓ When learners work in groups, teacher plays a role as a guide (153).
- ✓ Learners acquire a dynamic participation in the teaching-learning process (153).

According to Doff, these are some advantages of the application of group work.

- ✓ “*More language practice*”. - Learners perform speaking skill (141).
- ✓ “*Students are more involved*”. - When learners work in groups, they show interest and participate in the given task (141).
- ✓ “*Students feel secure*”.- Since some students get nervous at the



moment of speaking before the whole-class, working in groups makes them feel relaxed to talk in English in front of small members of the group (141).

- ✓ “*Students help each other*”.- In group work, members support each other telling their ideas, opinions, feelings in order to contribute in the development of the activity (141).

On the booklet *Making Groupwork Work*, their authors mention the following advantages.

- ✓ Members “share” their thoughts in order to solve an issue (Learnhigher 1).
- ✓ Students interact with others from diverse “social and cultural backgrounds” (Learnhigher 1).
- ✓ Learners identify their “specific strengths in group working” (Learnhigher 1).
- ✓ Students realize how to face and overcome some obstacles (Learnhigher 1).
- ✓ “Gain new, additional, and even creative perspectives on study topics” (Learnhigher 1).
- ✓ “Make new friends” (Learnhigher 1).
- ✓ “Develop communication skills” (Learnhigher 1).

Alexandra Smith in her article “Group Work benefits pupils, study finds” describes the results of a research which was carried out by the Institute of Education at London University its participants being 4000 students between five and fourteen years old. The researchers concluded during working in groups, the learners showed a fast advancement, and their behaviors were pleasant. Also, students concentrated more on their work and “thoughtful discussion.” Besides, “pupils learned to be more independent and communicate better with each other.” One of the researchers, Ed Baines, said “Group work serves the learning needs of pupils. What teachers should do is encourage pupils to get over their personal difficulties. Teachers shouldn't dominate a group but support it.” Nevertheless, the general



secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, (NASUWT), declared that the outcomes of this study were not authentic because a teacher cannot "stand back while children argue, shout, cry and storm off." However, Sally Barnes from the Early Years Curriculum Group, said "the most able teachers get children to work in groups and learn to negotiate their own problems but always with the support of the teacher. A teacher would never walk off, no one would ever do that, but children do learn to be more independent if they work in groups." In addition, Dr. Ed Baines said that the study did not pretend to propose group work as the only way of teaching but as a complement of "whole-class or individual learning." He expressed "It's about using group work strategically, not exclusively."

Other benefits mentioned by Ellen Sarkisian is that students who want play an active role in class; they "prepare better." Also, learners have the opportunity to accomplish in groups a long and complicated activity that would be difficult only for one student. Moreover, students can "teach each other."

## 2.5 Disadvantages of working in groups

Although working in groups presents great profits, in the way of its process, there are some difficulties, too.

Doff notes the following problems, but he also gives some solutions to them.

- X *"Noise"*. - Working in groups involves disturbance; however, students seem to be not annoyed by noise. Otherwise, "the noise created by groupwork is usually 'good' noise – students using English, or engaged in a learning task" (141).
- X *"Students make mistakes"*. - Mistakes appear because teacher cannot supervise all students at the same time. However, errors can decrease because of "giving enough preparation and checking afterwards" (141).
- X *"Difficult to control class"*. - Since teacher cannot check what each group does at the same time, control class reduces. Therefore, it is



important to take into account the following references. Teacher must “give clear instructions, give clearly defined tasks, and set up a routine” in order to work in groups (142).

Long classifies disadvantages in “use of L1, group control, costing, and error correction”, and he also finds some solutions (qtd. in Cinar).

- X *Use of L1.* - Because teacher cannot oversee all students during working in groups, learners do not speak the target language but use their native tongue. This problem can be reduced if teacher gave students some penalty, for example, extra activities (qtd. in Cinar).
- X *Group control.* - At least, inside groups, there is one member who pretends to complete the assignment by himself/herself, and the other participants are not taken into account. This obstacle can be removed when teacher gives roles to each member (qtd. in Cinar).
- X *Coasting.* - Inactive students can carry out the group task without working in the same. To avoid these complications, roles must be considered, again (qtd. in Cinar).
- X *Error correction.* - Since students can use the target language without restrictions, this situation generates some errors. During helping each other, these mistakes are transmitted, too. But if members realize and talk about them, inaccuracies can disappear (qtd. in Cinar).

Sarkisian finds the following problems during working in groups, but also she proposes some solutions.

- X *“Floundering”.* - Since there are not assigned roles, members lose time arguing. Because of confusion, disagreements, and quarrels, goals of the activity are not achieved (Sarkisian).
- X *“Dominating or reluctant participants”.* - Some students try to be authoritarians and impose on other members. Ellen suggests “sometimes humor can be used to discourage people from dominating.” Other members do not want to talk in front of the rest, so “asking quiet participants for their thoughts outside the group may lead



to their participation within the group” (Sarkisian).

- X *“Digressions and tangents”*. - Irrelevant ideas, opinions, or information can become barriers to finish the activity. Students focus on other topics losing time. To avoid setback, the author mentions that students can plan a schedule (Sarkisian).
- X *“Getting Stuck”*. - When learners realize that there is not much advancement, they feel discouraged to move on. One solution would be members take break time (Sarkisian).
- X *“Rush to work”*. - Some learners are able to find solutions quickly, so these students force the others who are not prepared to continue executing the task (Sarkisian).
- X *“Feuds”*. - Sometimes quarrels arise within groups; therefore, these situations stop working (Sarkisian).
- X *“Ignoring or ridiculing others”*. - “When someone consistently ignores or ridicules what others say, criticizing their experience or knowledge, good-natured humor or a private conversation outside the group can be effective” (Sarkisian).

Timothy Quinn in his article “GROUP WORK doesn’t spell collaboration” talks about some other “challenges of teaching collaboration.” That is to say, there are some factors which cause negative effects in the development of working in groups (48). Quarrels are one of the complications that group work presents. For instance one student bothers others because the other members are not his/her friends. Quinn defines this episode as “interpersonal issues that complicate social lives of students.” Another difficulty has to do with rules that some educational institutions have. For instance, if a group did not have enough time to finish an activity, members would need to meet outside class. However, this meeting would not be possible because of academic policies. (48)

After all, the author says that these challenges are important reasons why teachers continue applying group work in a class. In addition, he expresses “Without this experience, students who spend their K-12 education career



working in isolation will be ill-equipped to handle these challenges when they confront them in college and the workplace” (48).

Finally, according to Illingworth and Hartley, another disadvantage refers to division of tasks. They note “This may be a fairly common approach: for groups to divide up all the tasks at the start of the project for members to do in isolation and then assemble the completed sections at the end avoiding any real group collaboration in between” (8).

## 2.6 Group Work Composition

In order to set up a group work, teachers must bear in mind the following items: group size, roles, stages, and group work activities.

According to Richards and Lockhart, working in groups implicates the following aspects that have to be considered to achieve success.

- *Group size.* - It depends on the activity that learners are doing. Many students being part of a group can influence interaction. Namely, some members work, and the rest do not participate (153).
- *Purpose.* - Working in groups must present objectives, processes, and space to carry out tasks (153).
- *Roles.* - Since students play different roles, they have to make decisions in order to work in favor of the group (154).

### 2.6.1 Group size

How many students must be part of a group work? This is the interrogation concerning size of group. The following authors suggest some numbers.

According to Scott and Ytreberg, group work has to be constituted between three or five students (16).

The author Doff points out that there are “usually four or five students in each group” (137).

Atherton indicates that four learners is the ideal size of group work, and





he also says “it is not large enough for anyone to hide.”

Sarkisian mentions “if the group is small and one drops out, can the remaining people do the work? If the group is large, will more time be spent on organizing themselves and trying to make decisions than on productive work?”

As can be seen, some authors suggest four or five students as an appropriate size for working in groups.

### 2.6.2 Roles

Concerning roles which are other elements that need to be taken into account, they can vary depending on the group size and activity that is carried out.

First, teacher can assign roles or let students choose by themselves. When learners decide what roles want adopting, group development is better. Nevertheless, students may pick out for the convenient role eluding practice of other skills (National).

According to Johnson, et al.; Millis and Cottell; Smith, these are some roles (qtd. in National).

- *Group facilitator*: The member who guarantees that all students work and participate in the activity (qtd. in National).
- *Timekeeper*: As its name denotes, this member controls time and encourages group to finish the activity during a determined period (qtd. in National).
- *Recorder*: He or she “takes notes of the group's discussion and prepares a written conclusion” (qtd. in National).
- *Checker*: Student verifies that all member of the group get the ideas of the activity (qtd. in National).
- *Summarizer*: Learner who explains in brief all information obtained through the activity (qtd. in National).
- *Elaborator*: Member who associates the new results with “prior



concepts and knowledge” (qtd. in National).

- Research-Runner: Student supplies the required resources and is the \*link\* between the group and teacher (qtd. in National).
- *Wildcard*: “Learner assumes role of any missing member” (qtd. in National).

The author Ellen Sarkisian describes the following roles as “roles that contribute to the work.”

- *Initiating*: Member who suggests new techniques, gives ideas, cheers up the rest (Sarkisian).
- *Seeking information or opinions*: Student asks for more information (Sarkisian).
- *Giving information or opinions*: Learner who offers new data (Sarkisian).
- *Questioning*: He or she asks some relevant questions in order to contribute to the development of the task (Sarkisian).
- *Clarifying*: This member infers conceptions in order to clarify doubt or confusions (Sarkisian).
- *Summarizing*: Participant who explains information briefly. The author points out “This role is important if a group gets stuck” (Sarkisian).

The above mentioned roles are basically the most common inside group work; however, there can be more than these depending on the task.

### 2.6.3 Stages

Organization is a characteristic of working in groups, so group work needs to follow some phases. There are many models about group work stages; however, the most common one is Tuckman’s version whose phases are forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (qtd. in M. Smith).

- I. *Forming*. - In this first stage, students analyze “interpersonal” conducts in order to identify similarities and differences among group members. Based on the results, each member can develop a sense of dependence on leader or other participants (qtd. in M. Smith).



- II. *Storming*. - This stage is characterized by disagreements, rivalry, and contradictions around “interpersonal issues” among members so as to accomplish the activity (qtd. in M. Smith).
- III. *Norming*. - In this stage, harmony appears since some rules and roles are assumed by learners. Each member can give his or her point of view or ideas (qtd. in M. Smith).
- IV. *Performing*. - As its name implies, in this stage, members carry out the activity. Since in the previous stage students took some measures, now, they focus on the advance of the task (qtd. in M. Smith).
- V. *Adjourning*. - The last stage has to do with termination of the activity, roles, decline of “dependence”, and disconnection of relationships (qtd. in M. Smith).

As can be seen, members inside a group work experience these five stages in order to complete an activity, overcome some challenges, and learn from each other.

## 2.7 Group Work Activities

Group work activities are another factor that has to do with the composition of working in groups. The following ones are the most common activities.

### 2.7.1 Jigsaw

According to Richards and Rodgers, in this activity, students concentrate on a specific point of a topic. After learners have specialized on that item, they communicate their knowledge with the others (qtd. in Cinar). In addition, Cinar says “The jigsaw process encourages listening and engagement by giving each member of the group a crucial role to play in the activity.”

### 2.7.2 Team Practice

Richards and Rodgers point out that in this task, learners are involved in an interchange of personal information during a certain time. Also, students work helping each other to complete a task. At the end of the activity, students reply and clarify some questions and doubts (qtd. in Cinar).



### 2.7.3 Role Play

In this activity, students pretend to be another person. Each role presents given behaviors which learners have to perform. Richards and Rodgers note “role play is an excellent activity for implementing brain storming methodology in simulations of real situation, analyzing problems from various perspectives and enhancing team work, co-operation and creative problem solving in group work” (qtd. in Cinar).

### 2.7.4 Debate

Students are divided into contrary groups which advocate their points of view using arguments. Larsen-Freeman notes “debate provide an efficient framework for class presentations” (qtd. in Cinar).

### 2.7.5 Cooperative Projects

The authors Richards and Rodgers describe this activity where students choose a topic. Then they gather and analyze information as much as possible in order to present the topic before the whole class. Also, the authors point out “Cooperative projects are focused on discovery learning and individual learning” (qtd. in Cinar).

### 2.7.6 Discussion Session

Cinar describes this activity as “a kind of dialogue which consists of expression and exchanges of ideas, opinions and knowledge. At the end of the activity it is expected to summarize the key points which are raised.”

## 2.8 Teacher's Role

In group work activities, students are the active participants, but what happens with the teacher? Although the teacher plays a passive role, he or she has to know exactly what to do when students work in groups.

The author of the article “The Use of Group Work” states that the teacher can perform different roles at the moment of working in groups (4).

- *As an instructor and organizer.* - Teacher needs to be clear at the moment of giving instructions and organized when providing “feedback” at the end of the activity (4).
- *As a monitor.* - Teacher should verify if students are working in the



activity using the target language correctly. Professor also should realize if there were some difficulties (5).

- *As a consultant.* - As its name says, teacher should be an adviser to give some ideas when students face troubles (5).
- *As an observer.* - Teacher should walk around among groups to confirm that all learners are carrying out the activity, and he or she has to write notes about students' inaccuracies (5).
- *As an analyst.* - Teacher's function implicates evaluating students' labor and giving feedback (5).
- *As a participant.* - Teacher has to be involved in the development of group work activities performing by students. That is to say, teacher needs to demonstrate interest in what students do (5).
- *As a researcher and learner.* - Teacher must be prepared in order to help students. Namely, teacher needs to have required knowledge, so he or she must investigate before going to class (5).

## 2.9 Assessment of Group Work

How to know if group work really worked? In order to verify whether working in groups functioned or not, there are some measures to be considered.

In the article The Use of Group Work, its author states that evaluation must consider both the procedures and the results of learning. An appropriate estimation should be based on learners' action; therefore, teacher requires a precise "set of criteria" which states "evaluative judgments." The tools of evaluation are observation and self-assessment and peer assessment (5).

Observation implies that teacher registers what students do during working in groups. While learners work together and use the target language, it is inevitable that mistakes arise. So, teacher should not correct them at that moment because learners will feel annoyed and cheerless. Teacher only needs to write down them. At the end of the group work activity, teacher looks at its notes and give feedback group by group or before the entire



class. During assessment, teacher should concentrate on compliments rather than reproach (5).

Self-assessment and peer assessment has to do with recognizing. Each student distinguishes its own and the others' contributions. To accomplish this evaluation, teacher can design a checklist or questionnaire and give learners to fill them. So, students share the results, and teacher can give each group ideas in order to work better the next time (5).

## 2.10 Motivation

It is important to recognize that students are surrendered of several factors to learn a foreign language, in this case English. One of these factors has to do with motivation. The following authors give definitions of what motivation is.

Harmer defines motivation as an “*internal drive* that encourages somebody to pursue a course of action. It seems to be the case that if we perceive a *goal* (that is something we wish to achieve) and if that goal is sufficiently attractive, we will be strongly motivated to do whatever is necessary to reach that goal” (3).

According to Williams and Burden, motivation is “a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal (or goals)” (120).

Motivation does not only relate with individual's state, but also other elements. So, the above mentioned authors divide motivation into two main types: extrinsic and intrinsic.

### 2.10.1 Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation

Harmer states “extrinsic motivation is concerned with factors outside the classroom” (3). Also, he says that extrinsic motivation involves learner's “attitudes to the language,” so he points out “a student's attitude will be strongly influenced by those around him” (4).



Regarding intrinsic motivation, Harmer states “intrinsic motivation which is concerned with what takes place in the classroom” (3). He says that a lot of students are not motivated outside the classroom, so class’s environment plays an essential role in promoting motivation. Some of the aspects causing effects on intrinsic motivation are “physical conditions, method, the teacher, and success” (5).

But what does motivation have to do with working in groups? The next item is about what effects group work causes on student’s motivation.

### **2.10.2 How does Group Work affect student’s motivation?**

Both extrinsic or intrinsic motivation play a vital role on student’s learning, so group work, indeed, too. Group work and motivation have a lot of things in common, so both complement each other.

First, inside group work, students, all the time, have to make decisions, and according to Williams and Burden, making decisions is a crucial element of motivation. Therefore, learner’s motivation is affected directly by working in groups (136).

The next point has to do with cooperation. Since cooperation is one of the main pursued objectives by working in groups, it causes a great effect on student’s motivation, too. Williams and Burden says “Research appears to show that the group outcome of any task or activity has an effect upon individuals’ perceptions of their own ability and their feelings of satisfaction and self-esteem” (193).

Williams and Burden also states that working in groups promotes “a moral orientation.” Namely, group members encourage each other in order to do their best (194).

Since students are part of a community, they have to be involved in cooperative projects with others to participate in that community (Williams and Burden 194).

Finally, Williams and Burden state that applying group work inside a



language class fosters language learning and expands “the self-image and motivation of the group members” (195).





## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Basic Methodology

Since the purpose of this study is to identify students' preferences towards group work, this research is based on the qualitative method. The qualitative research is focused on acquiring a well-defined idea and comprehensibility of an interrogation, trouble, or topic (Stringer 19). In this case, the obtained information refers to students' preferences, so this kind of data reflects another characteristic of the qualitative method which has to do with subjectivity (Key). In spite of the above described method which is the main one employed along this study, the quantitative method is also requested in this research paper. Some information is displayed in illustrations which help the reader to have a clear idea of the results of this examination. Finally, action research also takes place in this investigation because it involves the participants' realities, the analysis of events, and the explanation of meanings to the issue (Stringer 20). Besides, action research is carried out in a classroom which is the principal location of this research.

Since action research is mainly performed through the qualitative method, it needs to present some factors which give trustworthy results (Stringer 57). For this reason, this exploration has the following characteristics in order to verify its consistency. Although this research was carried out in Ricardo Muñoz Chávez School, its results could be applied in other educational institutions. Therefore this study is transferable (Stringer 57). Another characteristic of this study involves confirmability which refers to the need of evidence to demonstrate that the procedures were accomplished (Stringer 57). This research has as evidence a record interview, questionnaires, and a survey. Credibility also has its effect in this study because the obtained information was generated from an interview, a survey, and observation (Stringer 57). Furthermore, this research has a literature review which provides different point of views about the topic.



### **3.2 Participants' Description**

This study was carried out in the eighth level at Ricardo Muñoz Chávez School the thirty six students being the main participants. They were chosen to form part of this study because this research paper is focused on teenage students. All the participants were female students, and they were twelve years old. Their native language was Spanish, so their English level was basic. As an additional detail, the English class is taught five hours per week.

### **3.3 Materials**

At the beginning of the application, a pretest was taken in order to know the students' knowledge about specific English structures. Likewise, at the end of the application, a post-test was also given to students in order to know the students' advance in the structures practiced through group work tasks. These tests had six multiple choice questions. Also, a camera was used in this research to take pictures of students at the moment of working in the groups. Moreover, the students answered two questionnaires in order to get some relevant information about students' preferences towards group work which is the central issue of this study.

### **3.4 Procedures**

First of all, the principal of Ricardo Muñoz Chávez School allowed carrying out this application, and the English teacher agreed, too. Both of them gave the facilities to perform the research. Also, the researcher communicated to the principal and teacher the purpose of this study, and the required information will be anonymous. The pretest, post-test, and survey were applied in the first week of June, and they had fifteen minutes to answer it. In addition, some group work activities were performed by the students so that the researcher could take notes about the learners' behaviors at the moment of working in groups. Finally, an interview was carried out, too.

### **3.5 Data-gathering techniques**

In order to get the desired information, the following techniques were applied. Since this study also employs the quantitative method, two surveys were applied at the beginning and at the end of the study to recognize some students' preferences, opinions, and feelings about group work. The first



questionnaire was designed with close-ended and open-ended questions, and some questions were the mix of both of them. This questionnaire was written in English. Due to some misunderstandings rose in the application of the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire was written in Spanish in order to facilitate the gathering of the information.

Another technique used in this exploration was observation. Observation is one of the main characteristics of action research in order to have clear interpretations about everybody's behaviors. Also, people need to experience by themselves, looking at what happens, in order to take away prejudices (Kelly). Since the students worked in groups, they showed different reactions at that moment. So the students' conducts were the main aspect of observation. All these responses were pertinent to development of this research paper.

Finally, an interview was applied in this research. Interviewing technique is a helpful resource because it proves the credibility of the investigation (Stringer 57). The questionnaire was developed on the base of open-ended questions. The interviewee was an English teacher who has had enough experience in the field of English teaching. Her opinions, experiences, and answers were considered in the development of this paper.

The next chapter includes the results, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data through the above mentioned techniques and procedures.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS-ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

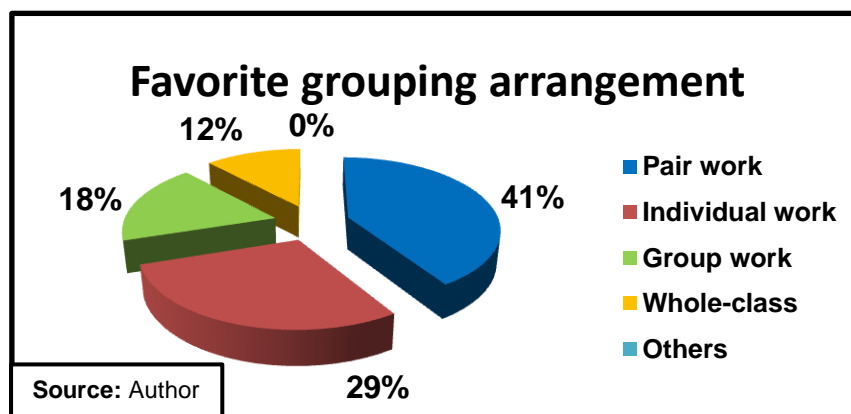
The present section includes the results and interpretations of the surveys, interview, and observations which were applied in this research. Moreover, this chapter presents the results of the questionnaires pre- and post-tests.

#### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of the surveys

##### 4.1.1 Analysis of the survey applied before working in groups

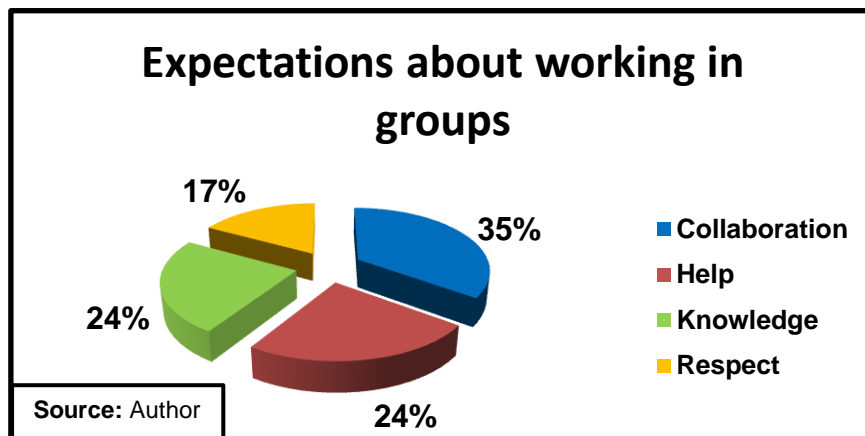
This survey was written in English, but at the moment it was applied, the researcher explained and translated each question for the students. This survey is attached in appendix #1.

**Figure #1**



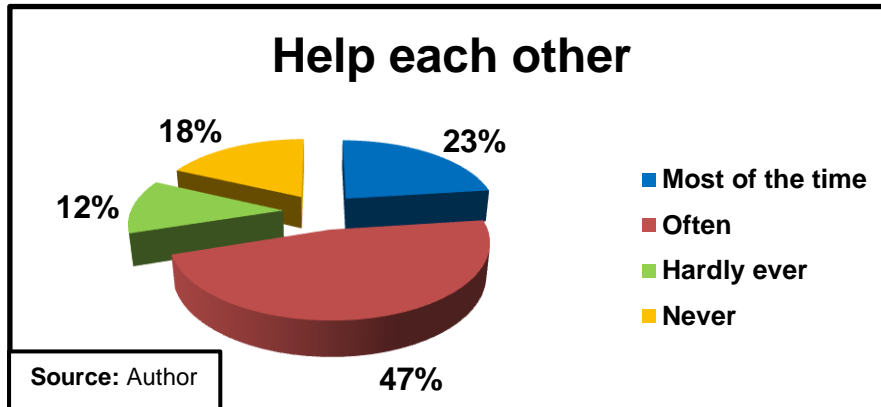
As can be seen in the figure #1, most of students chose pair work as their favorite grouping arrangement because they help and do not bother each other. 29% selected individual work because they do not want to quarrel with someone else. Group work got 18% because some students said that working in groups improves their knowledge. It means that group work was not preferred by the students. 12% picked out whole-class because they like to interact with the teacher.

Figure #2



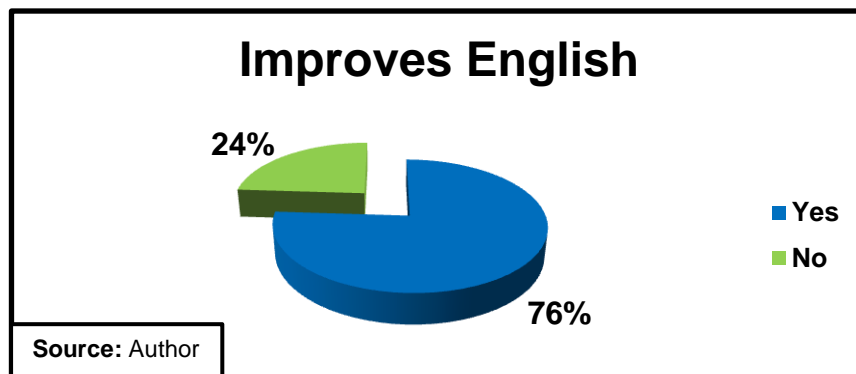
In the second question, collaboration is what most students aspire to at the moment of working in groups. Other desired points are help and improvement of knowledge which got 24% each. Finally, respect only obtained 17%.

Figure #3



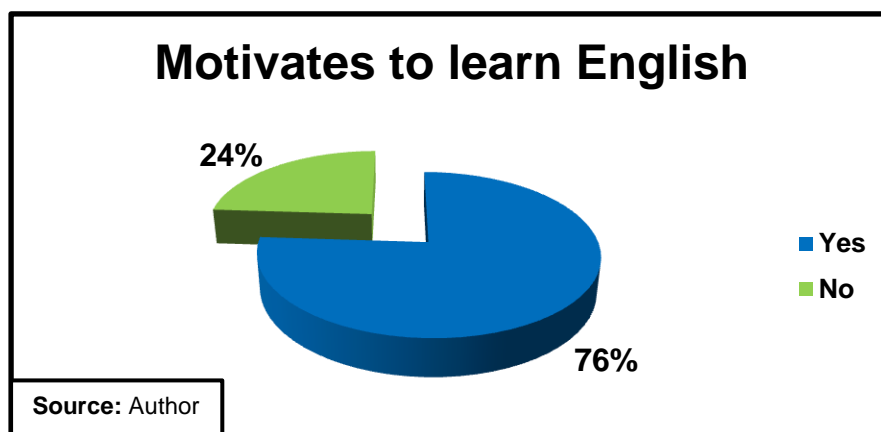
In this question most students said that members often help each other since there are some difficulties at the moment of working in groups. The quarter part chose most of the time, so it shows that not always is there support among members. The options hardly ever and never got 12% and 18%, respectively.

Figure #4



As can be seen 76% expressed that working in groups improves their level of English since they explain to each other and correct mistakes. 24% of students selected the negative answer because some group members confuse others.

Figure #5

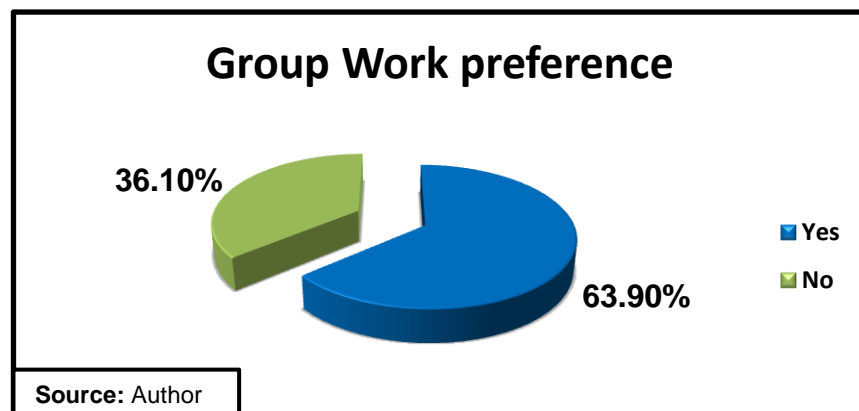


In the above figure, the majority of students answered that working in groups motivates them to learn English because among the members support and correct mistakes of each other. Because of these reasons, they know the meaning and function of new words or grammar structures. Only 24% gave a negative answer because they wrote that working in groups involves quarrels and disorder.

#### 4.1.2 Analysis of the survey applied after working in groups.

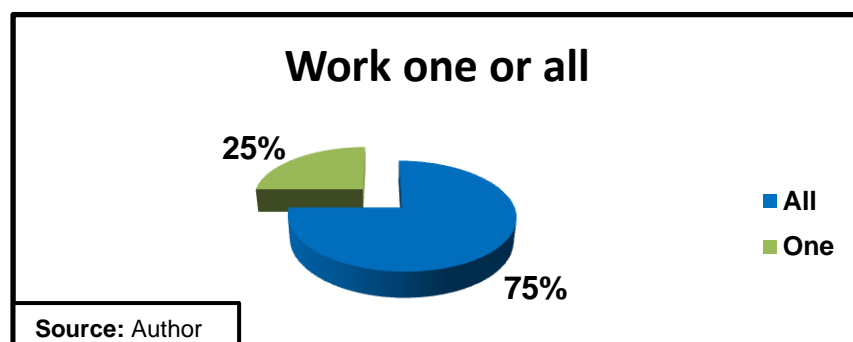
Since students did not understand very well the first survey applied in English, this survey was written in Spanish in order to collect the required data. These were the obtained results, and the original survey is attached in appendix #2.

**Figure #6**



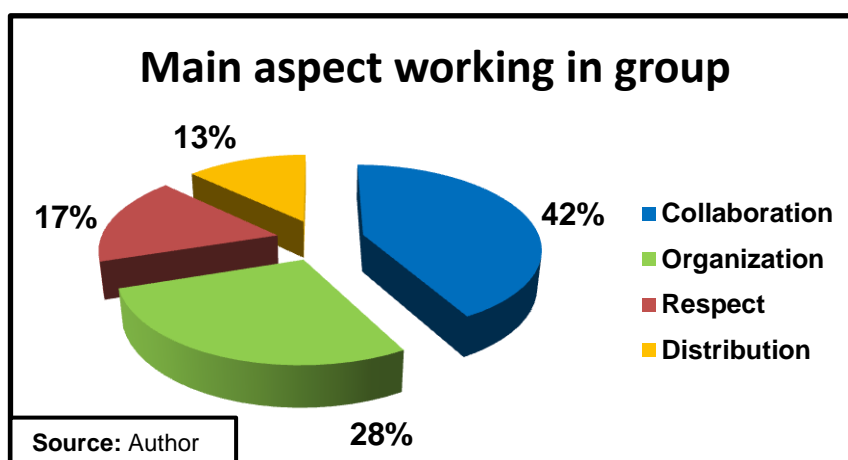
As can be seen in the figure #6, most of students liked working in groups because they shared opinions, ideas, and thoughts. They also helped each other, so they improved their knowledge. The other students said that they did not like working in groups. As Quinn describes in his article “one student working in a group was constantly harassing another student whom he disliked.” Less extreme but more common is the refrain, “I just don’t want to work with that person. Can I please switch groups?” (48). Quarreling was the main reason why these students did not enjoy working in groups.

**Figure #7**



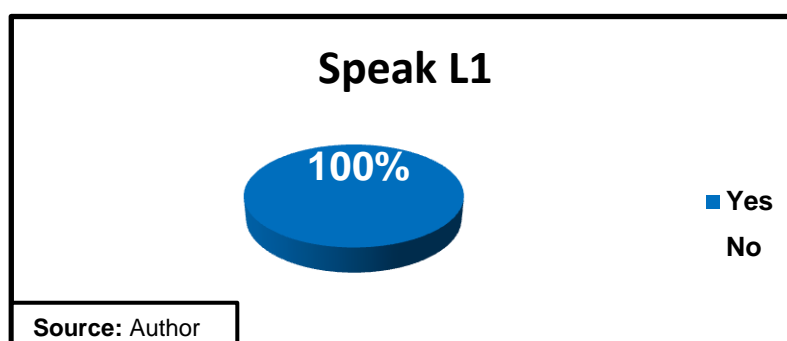
In the second question, the majority of students answered that all members did the group work activity, and only the fourth part of students said that just one person completed the given task. This is one of the disadvantages of group work, where some students do not collaborate to achieve the goal of the activity (Cinar).

**Figure #8**



In this question, 42% said that they took into account collaboration as the most important aspect to complete the task. 28% expressed organization was their priority. 17% mentioned respect as the central one. Finally, 13% manifested distribution was the essential aspect to work in groups. At the moment of working in groups, most students concentrated on collaboration rather than the other considerations. Richards and Lockhart mention that group work primarily stimulates collaboration among students (153).

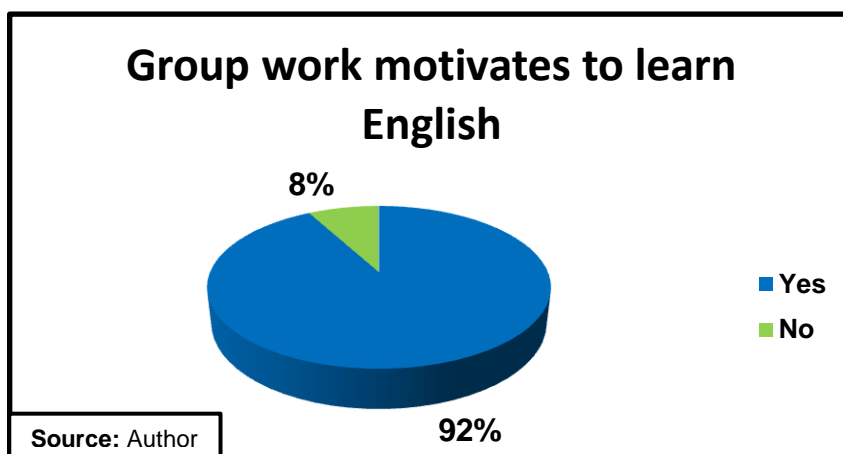
**Figure #9**





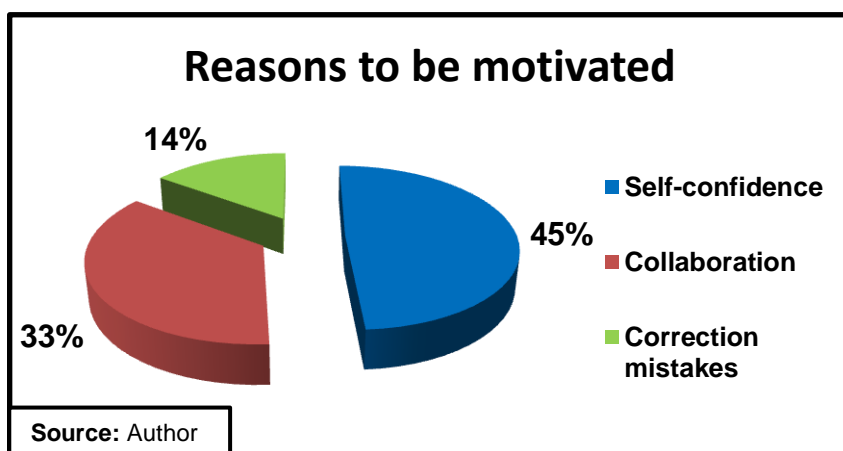
As can be seen in the above figure, all students spoke Spanish at the moment of working in groups because of the following reasons. They did not understand what they had to do. Others used the native language because they did not know meaning of words. The third cause was that some students had to explain others classmates. According to Cinar, the usage of L1 is one of the difficulties of group work.

**Figure #10**



In the fifth question, most students said group work motivated them to learn English, and a few students gave a negative answer. In the figure #11 there is some reasons.

**Figure #11**



In this question, it was only taken into account the 92% who said yes in the previous one. 45% said that they were motivated to learn English at the



moment of working in groups because they did not feel fear to speak English in front of some small group members. 33% were encouraged because there was collaboration. 14% mentioned that correction of mistakes was the reason. Thus, as Richards and Rodgers express that “through group work, anxiety and fear of learners are removed, and also learners’ motivation is generated” (qtd. Cinar).

#### **4.2 Interpretation of the interview**

The experienced English teacher expressed that group work is an appropriate technique because it benefits some students in their knowledge. Moreover, group work allows learners to develop the speaking skill. Nevertheless, group work presents some problems since students do not complete the task given by the teacher and speak in Spanish about irrelevant topics. In spite of these difficulties, group work motivates students to learn English, but teachers have to give them current and attracting topics. Also, students have to choose their classmates to work in groups in order to avoid interpersonal issues and work in harmony. The transcription of this interview is attached in the appendix #4.

#### **4.3 Observation**

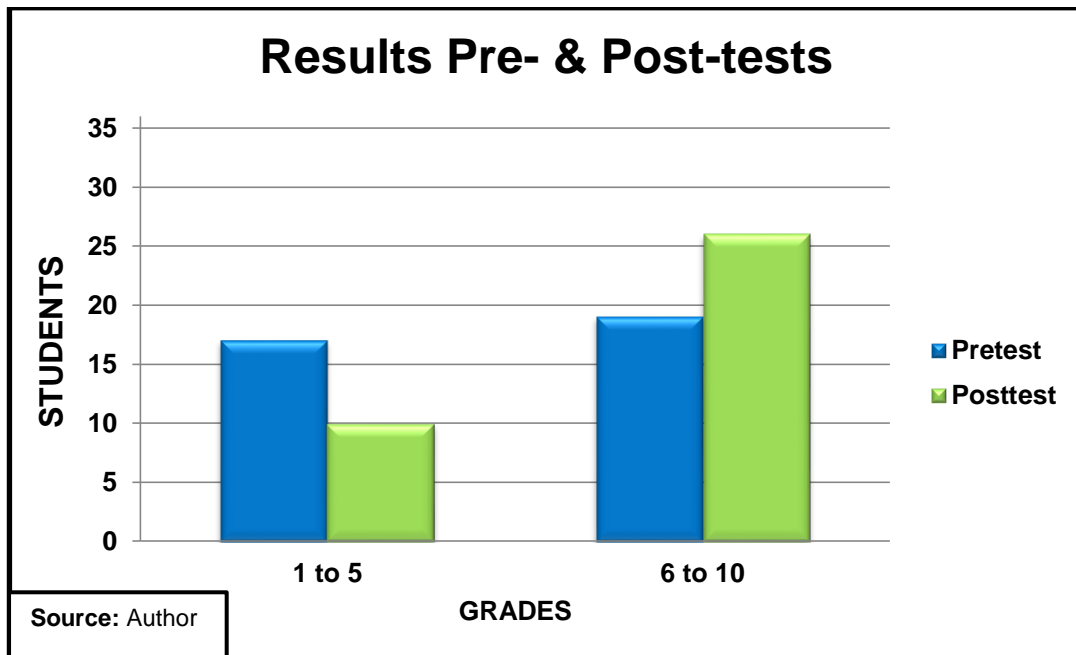
At the moment of working in groups, students presented some positive or negative attitudes. The majority of the groups enjoyed group work activities because the given material really attracted their attention. Moreover, they felt self-confidence to perform some skills in order to accomplish the assignments. In addition, since each member of the groups collaborated, they were satisfied with the finished activities. On the other hand, only one group had opposite behaviors, so the tasks were not completed. Just one member was interested in carrying out the project, while some of them bothered and argued with each other. The rest were passive members. For these reasons, one student was worried and felt disappointed, while the others did not pay any attention to the consequences. There are some pictures in the appendix #5.

#### 4.4 Results of the questionnaires

In order to identify if students learned the practiced structures in groups, a pre-test and a post-test were applied and these are the results. These questionnaires are attached in the appendix #6 and #7.

##### 4.4.1 Pre-test & post-test

Figure #12



As can be seen in the previous figure, in the pre-test, students did not know much about the structure of the simple present of have and like. They could not select the correct answers regarding yes/no and information questions. Therefore, there were low results. In contrast, in the post-test, the results about the same grammar structures which were practiced in groups were high grades. Only ten students had from one to five points, and twenty-six students got from six to ten points. Therefore, statistics shows that working in groups improved the students' knowledge because some members shared their knowledge with the rest of the group members and corrected mistakes among them.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to recognize teenage students' preferences towards group work, and if working in groups could motivate them to learn English as a foreign language at Ricardo Muñoz Chávez School. The results showed that the learners liked working in groups, and this learning strategy did work as a motivating element at the moment of learning English.

It is important to mention that before the application of this learning strategy, most of the students expressed that they preferred working in pairs or alone. However, at the end of the application, the majority of the learners said that they enjoyed working in groups.

### Conclusions

Through working in groups, the students performed some values such as collaboration, respect, and tolerance. Moreover, they interacted sharing their ideas, opinions, and emotions. Furthermore, the learners organized themselves in order to carry out the assignments.

Because of both cooperation and organization, the students could complete the given activity. Therefore, at the end of the activity, the learners did not face any trouble or feel frustrated.

Working in groups promoted communication among students. Each group member could practice the speaking skill. Also, some learners who did not want to speak before the whole class because of fear or shyness had the opportunity to do so in front of their group members.

Furthermore, within each group, fellowship was raised among the learners. Because of the task, each student could know a little bit about the rest of the group members. That is to say, the learners talked about their preferences regarding the topic.

All in all, working in groups really encouraged the teenage students to learn English because they could execute some skills or values that in individual work or in pairs would not develop.



### **Recommendations**

Since working in groups motivates the students to learn English, the teacher should consider some suggestions in order to take advantage of this learning strategy.

First, the teacher should take into account group work as a suitable learning strategy in order to avoid the adolescent students' apathy towards English.

Moreover, the teacher should select topics or activities which are more attractive for the teenage students.

Sometimes, the teacher should allow the students to choose their group members in order to avoid interpersonal issues and to work in harmony. However, the teacher should interchange group members, too, with the purpose of each student interacting with the rest of classmates and friendship arousal.

One of the disadvantages of group work is the students' use of their native language, so the teacher should create other strategies, rewards, or punishments such as homework, lessons, or extra activities, with the aim of avoiding this problem.

The teacher should assess the work of each group in a positive way. The teacher should not spotlight the students' mistakes but focus on the students' success.

When the teacher wants to correct mistakes, he or she should do so with each group, not in front of the whole class, in order to avoid embarrassment of the students.

Both the teacher and the students should respect each other at the moment of working in groups, with the intention of creating an appropriate class atmosphere.



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## APPENDICES





APPENDIX #1

GROUP WORK

The following survey intends to collect information related to Motivation: An exploratory study on preferences of teenage students towards group work in the EFL classroom.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

a) In the English class which of the following type of grouping arrangement is your favorite?

1. Individual work



2. Pair work



3. Group work



4. whole-class



5. Others (specify please).....

b) What expectations do you have when you work in groups?

.....  
.....

c) Do members of your group work help each other?

1. Most of the time .....

2. Often .....

3. Hardly ever .....

4. Never .....

d) Do you consider group work improves your English? Why?

Yes .....

No .....

.....  
.....

e) Does group work motivate you to learn English as a foreign language? Why?

Yes .....

No .....

.....  
.....



APPENDIX #2

ENCUESTA

La siguiente encuesta tiene la intención de recoger información relacionada a las preferencias de las estudiantes hacia el trabajo en grupo en la clase de inglés.

Edad: \_\_\_\_\_

Clase: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Durante la clase de inglés, ¿el trabajar en grupos es uno de sus favoritos?

Sí ☐

No ☐

¿Por qué?

---

---

2. Durante las actividades grupales:

Todos los compañeros trabajan ☐

Solo un compañero hace el trabajo ☐

3. ¿Cuál de las siguientes opciones es tomada en cuenta cuando trabaja en grupo?

Puede escoger una o varias opciones

Colaboración ☐

Dividir las tareas ☐

Respeto mutuo ☐

Organización ☐

3. ¿Cuándo está trabajando en grupo habla español?

Sí ☐

No ☐

¿En qué situaciones?

---

---

4. ¿El trabajar en grupo le motiva para aprender inglés?

Sí ☐

No ☐

5. Si en la pregunta 4 respondió que Sí, ahora escoja una o varias opciones del por qué se siente motivada.

Colaboración ☐

Corrección de errores ☐

No tiene miedo de hablar en inglés ☐

GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN





**APPENDIX #3**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Would you tell me what type of grouping arrangement students prefer in your classroom? and why?
2. In your experience, what do you think about group work?
3. What are some students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language that you perceive when they work in group?
4. Should students choose their members of group work? Why? or why not?
5. How do you think group work motivates students to learn English as a foreign language?



**APPENDIX #4**

**Interview-Transcription**

**Interviewer:** Good morning! Lcda. Armijos I'm going to ask you some questions about the topic group work.

**Lcda. Armijos:** Good morning! I'm glad helping you.

**Interviewer:** Ok let's start would you tell me what type of grouping arrangement students prefer in your classroom? and why?

**Lcda. Armijos:** According to my experience, students prefer to work whole class and group work because in whole class they have eye contact with the teacher and group work because they can practice the speaking skill.

**Interviewer:** In your experience, what do you think about group work?

**Lcda. Armijos:** I think it's a good technique because it helps some students who can't understand the new knowledge.

**Interviewer:** What are some students' attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language that you perceive when they work in group?

**Lcda. Armijos:** In some cases, students don't do the task asked by the teacher, but they talk in Spanish other topics.

**Interviewer:** Should students choose their members of group work? Why? or why not?

**Lcda. Armijos:** According to my experience, students should choose their classmates to work in groups because they can work in a better way; in contrast, when teacher puts them into group, in the majority of cases; there are students who don't get along each other, so that they can't work well.

**Interviewer:** Last question. How do you think group work motivates students to learn English as a foreign language?

**Lcda. Armijos:** Giving them interesting and current topics according to their



ages and preferences.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much Lcda. Armijos.

**Lcda. Armijos:** Your welcome! It was a pleasure helping you.

**Source:** Armijos, Jenny. Personal interview. May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.

APPENDIX #5

Group Work









APPENDIX #6

Pre-test

Age: .....

Class: .....

1. Circle the correct answers.

- Do / Does you have any books?
- How many pencils does / do she have?

2. Order the following questions.

a. reggaeton? / Do / like / they /

.....

b. does / like? / he / music / of / kind / What /

.....

3. Underline the correct pronoun.

- |         |     |                   |       |      |                |
|---------|-----|-------------------|-------|------|----------------|
|         | you |                   | she   |      |                |
| a. Does | he  | have any sisters? | b. Do | it   | have any cars? |
|         | We  |                   |       | they |                |

4. Circle the correct answer.

- How many sisters does she have?
- a. She has 2 sisters.
- b. She doesn't has sisters.

5. Complete the following questions with the words in the box.

Do	like	does	kind
----	------	------	------

- a. .... you like rap music?
- b. What ..... of music does she like?
- c. Does he ..... Salsa music?
- d. .... Sara like pop music?





Post-test

Age: .....

Class: .....

1. Answer the following questions.

a. Do you have any brothers?

.....

b. How many cousins do you have?

.....

c. Do you like Mexican music?

.....

d. What kind of music do you like

.....

2. Write the correct letter.

a. What kind of music does Shakira like?

☐

No, she doesn't.

b. How many children does Homer have?

☐

She likes pop music.

c. Does Marge have 5 babies?

☐

He has 3 children

d. Does Prince Royce like Bachata music?

☐

Yes, he does.

3. Complete the following questions with the words in the box.

a. What kind of music do you .....?

b. ....she like rap music?

c. How ..... cars do they have?

d. Do they ..... any books?

like    many    have
----------------------

4. Circle the correct answer.

a. How many / How much pencils do you have?

b. Does Marge have / has any babies?

c. What kind of music do / does they like?

d. Do you like / likes romantic music?



APPENDIX #8

LESSON PLAN

**Aim:** By the end of the lesson, students will be able to ask and answer yes/no and informative questions using have and any.

**Structure**

**Do you have any** sisters?

**How many** cars **do** they **have**?

**PRESENTATION**

**Situation:** Talk about our families.

**Do you have any** brothers? Yes, I have. No, I don't.

**How many** cousins **do** you **have**? I **have** 7 cousins.

**PRACTICE**

- **Mechanical:** All students repeat the sentences on the whiteboard.

**Do you have any** uncles? Yes, I **have**. No, I don't.

**How many** friends does she **have**? She **has** 3 friends.

- **Meaningful**

**Teacher:** **Do you have any** brothers?

**Student:** No, I don't.

**Teacher:** **How many** cousins **do** you **have**?

**Student:** I **have** 8 cousins.

Do you	have any sisters?	have any brothers?	have any cousins?
Student1	x	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	x	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student3	x	x	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

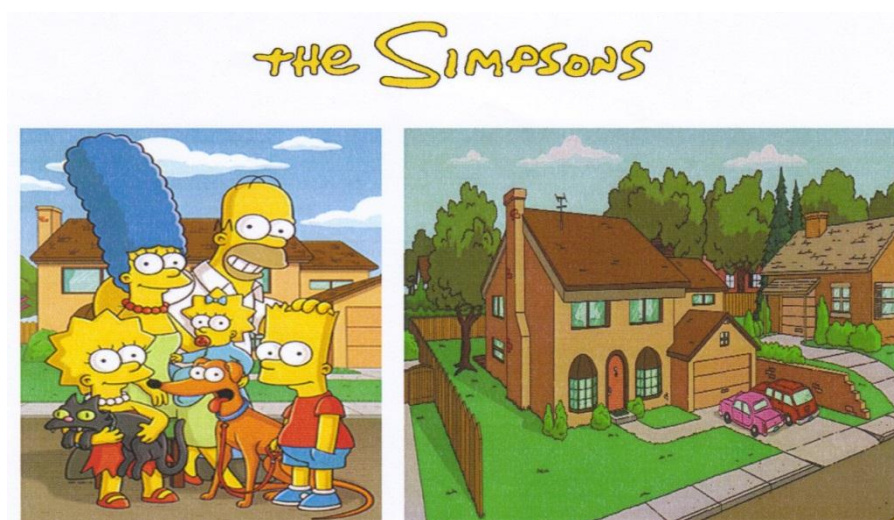
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes, I have.
x	No, I don't.

How many	friends do you have?	grandparents do you have?	cousins do you have?
Student1	I have 5	I have 3	I have 8
Student2	I have 3	I have 2	I have 10

## PRODUCTION

**Groups:** Each group receives a work sheet and two pictures.

Students have to put in order questions and answers according to the pictures.



**Source:** [http://es.simpsons.wikia.com/wiki/The\\_Simpsons](http://es.simpsons.wikia.com/wiki/The_Simpsons)

<http://kay4ni.wordpress.com/2013/02/23/the-simpsons-as-first-time-buyers/>



3

Group Work Activity

- Look at the pictures.
- Paste in order the yes/no and informative questions and their answers correctly.

1. (Question) How many children does Homer have?

(Answer) He has 3 children.

2. (Question) Does Marge have any babies?

(Answer) Yes, she does.

3. (Question) Do they have 4 cars?

(Answer) No, they don't.

4. (Question) How many cars do they have?

(Answer) They have 2 cars.



## LESSON PLAN

**Aim:** By the end of the class, students will be able to express likes using the simple present of **like**.

### Structure

- **Do** you **like** reggaeton music? Yes, I do.                      No, I don't.
- **What kind of** music **do** you **like**?              I **like** romantic music.
- **Does** she **like** rap music? Yes, she does.              No, she doesn't.
- **What kind of** music **does** he **like**? He **likes** Salsa music.

### PRESENTATION

<b>Do</b> you	<b>like</b>	rap music?
<b>What kind of</b> music	do you	<b>like</b> ?

### PRACTICE

**Teacher:** Asks the questions: Do you like pop music?

**Student1:** Yes, I do.

**Student2:** No, I don't.

**Teacher:** What kind of music do you like?

**Student2:** I like rock music.

### PRODUCTION

**Groups:** Each group receives some cards

Students have to put in order

Then they write on the whiteboard and answer.

What	kind	of	music	do	you	like?
Do	you	like	romantic	music?		